

Steps to Managing Your Memory

In just the last few years there has been an explosion of new diagnostic tests and criteria to help evaluate memory loss, as well as a huge expansion in our knowledge of treatments, diets, and exercises to help memory in individuals aging normally as well as in those with mild cognitive impairment, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease.

What foods should I eat or avoid to help my memory?

- What's good for the body is good for the brain
- Omega-3 fatty acids may be helpful, particularly from foods.
- Vitamin D is important for brain health
- Deficiency of vitamin B12 and other B vitamins can cause memory loss and other serious problems
- Get antioxidants from your food
- Mediterranean-style diets appear to be most beneficial for brain health: Fish, Vegetables, Olive oil, Avocado, Nuts, Fruit, Beans, Whole grains (including bulgur, barley, & brown rice)
- No evidence for fish oil for brain health
- No evidence for coconut oil
- One alcoholic beverage per day is not harmful
- It's never too late to start eating a healthy diet
- You don't have to be perfect
- Chocolate, in small amounts, can benefit thinking, memory, and mood
- Eating whole grains in moderation is not harmful
- Limit consumption of butter, margarine, red meats, fried foods, fast foods, pastries, sweets, white rice, and white flour

Can physical activity and exercise help my memory?

- It's never too late to start exercising
- Check with your doctor prior to starting a new exercise program and if you are having any new or concerning symptoms when exercising
- An ideal exercise program includes at least 30 minutes daily of aerobic exercise plus additional exercise for strength, balance, and flexibility each week
- Exercise reduces the risk of strokes
- Falls are more common with age
- Yoga and Tai Chi can reduce falls
- Exercise improves sleep
- Exercise improves mood
- Exercise releases growth factors that produce new brain cells
- Exercise improves thinking and memory in healthy individuals
- Exercise improves thinking, memory, and quality of life in individuals with mild cognitive impairment and dementia due to Alzheimer's disease
- Make an exercise plan

What can I do to strengthen my memory?

- Brain-training games: Not enough evidence—yet
- Engage in novel, mentally stimulating activities
- Pursue social activities
- Keep a positive mental attitude

What strategies can I use to help my memory?

- Practice active attention
- Minimize distractions in the environment
- Take breaks
- Repeat information spaced out over time
- Make connections
- Create visual images
- Put it in a location
- Use the first letter method
- Use chunking
- Cluster information by topic
- Invent rhymes
- Get emotional
- Test yourself
- Write it down
- It can be difficult to remember names
- When it is on the tip of your tongue, relax
- Learn the name well in the first place
- Review names prior to attending a social event
- It's OK to forget a name

Which memory aids are helpful?

- The 3 Golden Rules: Don't delay; Keep it simple; Make it routine
- Get organized
- Designate a memory table
- Use a pillbox
- Rely on calendars or daily planners
- Take advantage of technology
- Keep a notebook
- Make lists
- Use reminder notes
- Develop a routine
- Memory aids are for everyone



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